



## Review Article

# Ensuring a Safe Working Environment in Nigeria: Reality or Myth

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**Abstract:** The importance work to man and man to work cannot be overemphasized. Because of this essentiality of work, workers spend most of their time in the work environment. The safety of work environment is therefore essential and important. The paper assessed issues related to ensuring safety in the work environment, taking into cognizance the important roles of the government (regulatory bodies), employer and employee, vis-a-vis policy formulations, policy enforcement and compliance and assess how Nigeria as a nation has performed to draw a conclusion whether the nation is on the part to securing her work environment or otherwise. While they are some occupational health and safety policies/laws in Nigeria, majority of those laws are obsolete and poorly enforced. Safety guideline compliance is very poor among both the employers and employee. If this trend is not corrected ensuring a safe working environment in Nigeria is largely a myth than been a reality.

**Keywords:** Safety, Compliance, Regulatory, Working Environment

## 1. Introduction

According to Bureau of Labour Statistics, United State Department of Labour (2014) about one third of an average American time is spent at work. It is most likely going to be more for many developing nations of the world where majority of the working population are in the informal sector of the economy with many people engaging in low income jobs. It is therefore no gain-saying that most of the people's productive day time are spent at work with little time spent at home. These make the work environment an important part of people's life and health. Therefore, the provision of safe working environment in both formal and informal sector of the economy is essential (Olurinola, Fadayomi, Amoo, & Ola-David, 2014) to ensure the health of the workers and everybody in the work place; improve production and positive contributions to the world economy at large. A healthy work force makes a healthy nation.

Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English described safety as a condition of being free from danger, harm or risk, while Hughes and Ferrett (2005) defined it as protection of people from physical injury. They stated further that "the

borderline between health and safety is illness defined, as the two words are used together to indicate concern for the physical and mental well-being of individual at the workplace." Hughes and Ferrett (2005) in their wisdom also define workplace safety as the protection of the body and mind of people from illness resulting from materials, processes or procedures used in the workplace. It therefore, means that a safe working environment is that in which its components i.e physical, biological, emotional, spiritual, psychological, mental, etc., support the health and wellbeing of everyone in the work environment and preventing them from all forms of illness, diseases and deformities that can arise from the materials, process or procedures used in the work place.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2006) estimated that, globally, about 2.2 million people die every year from occupational accidents and diseases, while some 270 million suffer serious non-fatal injuries, another 160 million fall ill for short or long period from work-related causes, emanating from problems and challenges associated with unsafe working environment or condition. This represents an enormous toll of suffering for workers and their families. In addition, the ILO (2006) projected that the total

costs of such accidents and ill health amount to about 4% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Also study by the European Commission estimates that the costs of occupational accidents in the EU15 (15 European Union Member States) in the year 2000 was €55 billion a year (ILO, 2006).

Evidence have shown in many nations of the world that the level of safety attained in any working environment is affected by level of investment in safe working environment by the employers, employees and favorable government policies to ensure that every party play their own roles appropriately (Olurinola, Fadayomi, Amoo, & Ola-David, 2014). While all these three (verb?) important partners in ensuring safety in the work environment have consistently play their part in ensuring safety in work environmental in many developed nations of the world, this cannot be said of many nations especially Nigeria where most private firm owners are only interested in profit with many governmental organizations that are suppose to uphold strict adherence to work environment safety policies are highly corrupt (Idubor & Osiamoje, 2013). Also many employees have been found not to comply with many safety policies of their work place and government for diverse reasons.

Unsafe and unhealthy environment occur as a result of error (inadvertent act), omission (failure to take precaution which is known to reduce the likelihood of critical incident or situation occurring) and violation (deliberate act which is unsafe) (Makin, 2009). The work environment in majority of industries are unsafe and unhealthy (Koehn and Datta, 2003), this is due bad workplace layout, design and planning. This situation is more acute in the Nigerian environment which is bedeviled by chronic un-employment, corruption, bad and out dated legislation and inappropriate enforcement mechanism (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). The shortcomings highlighted above manifest itself in poorly designed workstations unsuitable furniture, lack of ventilation, inappropriate lighting, excessive noise, insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies and lack of personal protective equipment. People working in such environment are prone to occupational diseases that impacts on employee's performance (Chandrasekar, 2011) and their productivity continue to decrease at an alarming rate (Hagberg, *et al.*, 2002). The quality of the employee's workplace environment must impact on their health and level of motivation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The comfort of workforce with regard to the physical environment, especially the immediate environment, influences to a great extent their error rate, level of innovation and collaboration with other employees, absenteeism and ultimately, how long they stay in the job (MacLeod and Clarke, 2011). The relationship between workplace layout and the physical environment need to conducive in order for workers to perform effectively and efficiently. (Leblebici, 2012).

In Nigeria, due to the introduction of high – tech equipment and work processes, workers in the manufacturing sector are daily exposed to diverse occupational health hazards such as dusts, gases, noise, vibration, radiation, extreme temperature and other highly reactive chemicals like carbon dioxide,

carbon monoxide, ozone, sulphuric acid, nitrogen oxide and host of others, which had led to sudden death of some workers and gross deficit in the health status of others (Omokhodion, 2009; ILO, 2011). As a result of the constant exposure of factory workers to occupational health hazards, which usually make the work environment unsafe, the health as well as the productive capacity of the workers had been impaired. Some of the reported occupational diseases often contacted by factory workers in Nigeria include conjunctivitis, chronic bronchitis, dermatitis, musculoskeletal disorders and injuries (Omokhodion, 2009) among others, depending on the type of hazard that the individual is exposed to.

Arogundade (2005) reported that a total sum of 47, 832, 536 and 40, 836, 676 claims were paid as workmen's compensation and employers' liability by the insurance companies in Nigeria in 1997 and 1998 respectively. Greater percentage of the claims according to Ajakaye (2010) were on work related death and illness of factory workers. Though high tech innovation that facilitates mass production of products is a good development; the phenomenon must be accompanied by increased measures directed at controlling the work related hazards.

Accident on the other hand is defined as any unplanned event that result in the injury or ill health of people or damages or loss to property, plant, materials or environment or loss of business opportunities (Hughes and Ferrett, 2011). Hazard is the potential of a substance, activity or process to cause harm (Rogers, 2003). In ensuring a healthy and safe working environment therefore both health and safety hazards must be curtailed in the work environment.

## 2. Objective

This paper seeks to isolate issues related to ensuring safety in the work environment, taking into cognizance the important roles of the government (regulatory bodies), employer and employee, vis-a-vis policy formulations, policy enforcement and compliance and assess how Nigeria as a nation has performed to draw a conclusion whether the nation is on the part to securing her work environment or otherwise.

## 3. The Concept of Safe Working Environment

Safety constitutes one of the essential human needs, as postulated by Abraham Maslow in his theory of needs hierarchy. Feeling safe at work ranks as a very important factor in job satisfaction (Kreitner, 2007). In an attempt to satisfy this need certain organizations incorporate into their policy thrusts, guaranteeing workers' safe work execution under a climate capable of enhancing the physical, mental, and emotional conditions. Organizational policy of this nature is often categorized under health and safety. Under work environment, Hall and Goodale (1986) describe employee health as the absence of illness or disease resulting from the interaction of employee and the work environment. Safety means freedom

from the occurrence or risk of injury or loss (Aswathappa, 2004). Aswathappa described industrial or employee safety as the protection of workers from the danger of industrial accidents. Safety can as well be referred to as the absence of injuries due to the interaction of the employee and the work environment (Lucas, 2001). In a general perspective, safety means a condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injuries or loss. Hence, safety policies may encompass activities directed at either reducing or complete removal of hazardous conditions capable of causing bodily injuries.

Organizational safety policy, according to Aswathappa (2004), specifies the company's safety goals and designates the responsibilities and authority for their achievement. According to him, such policy statement must emphatically declare four fundamental points- (i) the safety of employees and the public; (ii) safety taking precedence over expediency; (iii) every effort made to involve all managers, supervisors and employees in the development and implementation of safety procedures; (iv) safety legislation to be complied with.

Occupational Safety and Health is an interdisciplinary area that entails protecting the health, safety and welfare of people in the workplace (Kalejaiye, 2013) and others that may be affected directly or indirectly by the activities at the workplace. In the organized private sector, trade unions as well as relevant government agencies monitor firms' compliance to safety policies, employee compensation laws and standards regarding health and safety of the employee and others in the work environment. The informal sector however lacks such degree of formal worker organization, thus making it a difficult case. In the developing nations where the informal economy represents a significant fraction of the overall employment, it is expected that the informal sector would be given greater considerations with regards to occupational health and safety (WHO-ILO, 2000).

Due to the nature and frequency of occupational injuries and diseases prevalent among workers in the informal sector and among small and medium enterprises, Rafei (2004) advocates increasing governmental and regulatory bodies' attention to the matters of occupational health and safety. He noted that the absence of legislative, administrative and technological provisions for the sector account for the volume of casualties recorded from year to year. In addition, the International Labour Organization sponsored study conducted and reported by Comaru & Werna (2013) examined the health and safety related issues in informal sector enterprises and concludes by recommending safe practices that can enhance the health status of urban workers in the informal sector as this forms an important part of human capital formation and development.

Dodo, Buhari, & Andrew (2011) asserted that the Health and Safety Management Plan should be aimed at promoting and maintaining the highest degree of physical, mental and social wellbeing of workers. prevention of departure from health among workers caused by their working conditions, the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health, the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his

physiological and psychological capabilities. In another words the adaptation of work to man and of each man to his job should be the utmost are all aims any Health and Safety Management Plan. Griffith & Howarth (2011) in their own understanding argued that the key impetus to achieving a safe and healthy working environment is to ensure that health and safety issues are assessed, planned, organized, controlled, monitored, recorded, audited and reviewed in a systematic and holistic way.

Recognizing and controlling workplace hazards is an essential tenet of maintain as safe working environment. According to Hughes and Ferrett (2005) on Recognising and controlling workplace hazards, National Council of Occupational draw out Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines, (2001), in this guideline a job hazard is described as anything that can cause physical and mental injury at the workplace. The Guideline distinguishes between health and safety hazard. It states that safety hazard cause immediate injury, direct injury or trauma such as severed finger, crushed hand, broken nose and eye damage; while health hazard cause immediate illness (acute) or over a long period (chronic). It listed the followings as safety hazard: unguarded machinery, damaged plugs, outlets and wires, unbalanced walking surface, tripping hazard, falling objects, holes in the ceiling, blind spots (vehicles). Health hazards are chemicals (dusts, gases, vapours) which causes fire, burns, and explosions or affects the vital organs. Biological: (animals, insects, bacteria, and virus/blood) which may result in HIV, flu, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and rabies and so on. Physical hazards are noise, radiation, heat, cold, stress, repetitive motion which causes, deafness, burns, blood disorder, cancer, musculo - skeletal injury and heat stroke (hypothermia). Risk, is the likelihood of a substance, activity or process to cause harm. This can be reduced if hazards are controlled by good physical layout and conscientious management (Hughes and Ferrett, 2005).

It is therefore imperative that to guarantee a safe working environment in any nation and work place; there has to be up to date workplace safety rules and regulation that is made known to all the parties in the workplace, adequately enforced and complied with by all and sundry. This therefore means that to ensure a safe working environment the employee, employer and government especially through her regulatory bodies has an important role to play.

#### **4. The Nigeria Situation (Reality or Myth)**

Workplace safety from all known facts is anchored on curtailment of health and safety hazards in the workplace. This can only be achieved when every work operation is guided by appropriate laws and regulation that is duly enforced without bias or prejudice and adequately complied with by all and sundry, including the policy makers, employers of labour and employees. Therefore, the Nigeria situation will be discussed in line with availability of appropriate laws and regulations; enforcement of those laws and whether or not they are been complied with to answer the golden question that this seminar is designed to answer.

#### **4.1. Occupational Safety and Health Legislations in Nigeria**

The inception of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) regulations/bills in Nigeria runs from the introduction of the Labour Act of 1974 to the passage of the Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012. After voting, it may also need presidential assent to fully complete the process of becoming a law or legislation. During the above period, the Factories Act of 1987 (now known as Factories Act of 1990), which Kalejaiye (2013) reports as a substantial revision of the Factories Act of 1958 (i.e. colonial legislation), the Workman's Compensation Act of 1987, the Labour Act of 1990, the Workman's Compensation Act of 2004, the Employee's Compensation Act of 2011 (which repeals the Workman's Compensation Act of 2004) were introduced; some of these laws are criticized as inadequate. Also Occupational Safety and Health Bill, 2008 is a bill to make provision for securing the safety, health and welfare of persons at work, for protecting others against risks to safety or health in connection with activities of persons at work, to establish the national council for occupational safety and health and for related issues. Okojie (2010); and Idubor & Osiamoje (2013); contend that the severities of penalties stipulated by OSH laws in Nigeria are insignificant; in that offenders are not deterred by the penalties. In reality there are various aspect of many of this laws that are outdated are no longer relevance and cannot cope with current realities and challenges. Many of this legislation are as old as Nigeria herself and grossly inadequate to cope with the present reality. Take for instance they are no specific regulations specifying the minimum distance of some factories or workplace that generate hazardous waste to residential buildings. It is no gain saying that as at today there if no known law in Nigeria specify what should be the distance of sawmill and other wood dust producing factories to residential building. This is also true of some other workplaces. While a lot has been documented about the utilization of personal protective equipments (PPE) in preventing many work related hazards among workers, only few workers used them appropriately, this might be due know availability of laws that spell out specific sanctions for those not complying with the use of PPE.

#### **4.2. Occupational Safety and Health Regulations Enforcement**

Policy formulation and implementation are essential roles of the government in ensuring safe working environment. It is an important duty of the government to always ensure that they are adequate policies that will guarantee the safety of everybody in the work environment and the policies must be constantly review to ensure relevancy with current realities. Formulation and enforcement of regulations are very vital in ensuring the efficacy of regulations. Scholars like Anderson (2007) and Idubor & Osiamoje (2013) opined that formulated regulations without adequate enforcement are as good as no laws. In addition, Idubor & Osiamoje (2013) suggested that lack of strict enforcement of OSH regulations encourages non-compliance to OSH regulations with resultant increase in

injuries and disease burden associated with work. Whereas non-compliance to OSH regulations is a major contributor to the poor state of OSH in Nigeria, Diugwu et. al., (2012) maintained that the failed OSH management system in Nigeria is due to the non-functional OSH regulations and provisions. On the other hand, it is argued that enforcement and compliance with OSH regulations are not the standalone steps for improving OSH, as improving organizational culture can also improve OSH (Nnedinma, David, Keith Jones, & Boniface, 2014).

However, it is worth noting that the benefits of proper enforcement of OSH regulations are evident in nations with remarkable health and safety records like the United Kingdom, United States of America, Germany and many other developed nations. These support Anderson (2007); Diugwu et al. (2012); Idubor & Osiamoje (2013) arguments substantially. Anderson (2007) believes that as the main objective of OSH legislation is to prevent accidents and ill health in the workplace, there should be effectiveness and accountability in the enforcement of OSH rules and regulations.

In Nigeria different Department in government and agencies has been saddled with different responsibility in ensuring safe work environment. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity (Inspectorate Division) enforces OSH regulations while the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health will enforce the Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012 in Nigeria. Also, the federal and state ministries of environment and their parastatals are saddled with the responsibilities of making sure factories adhere to environmental safety issues among others.

So far, the efficacy and accountability of The Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity in the enforcement of OSH regulations in Nigeria are evidently questionable and poor (Nnedinma, David, Keith, & Boniface, 2014). This according to Okolie & Okoye (2012) is probably due to the fact that OSH enforcement is not the principal practice in Nigeria. This has also been amplified in submissions of Diugwu et al. (2012); Idubor & Osiamoje (2013); Idoro (2008, 2011) which demonstrate the ineffective and nonfunctional state of the OSH regulatory system in Nigeria.

The series of plane crashes, collapse of buildings, and high accident and fatality rates inter alia in Nigeria are further evidence. Given the recent increased infrastructural development in Nigeria, which will worsen the already failed OSH as accidents, injuries and fatalities will increase and the role of effective enforcement in achieving optimum OSH (Nnedinma, David, Keith, & Boniface, 2014).

Nnedinma, David, Keith, & Boniface, (2014) identified two important approaches in ensuring OSH regulations enforcement. This according to them includes reactive approach and the proactive & collective participatory approach:

#### **4.3. Reactive Approach**

This approach of enforcement involves inspection of workplaces to detect flaws and make recommendations for

improving the state of OSH (Makhonge 2005). Employers or factory owners in most developing countries including but not limited to Nigeria alone wait for the enforcement authority to point out contraventions before steps are taken. Furthermore, should the OSH offence be highly rated, the offender may be charged to court (Makhonge 2005); this implies that this approach is corrective and does not encourage full participation of all in organizations and stakeholders in various industries. Makhonge (2005) also argued that consequently, organizations take only basic steps in terms of OSH compliance. He further stressed that this is a traditional approach that was proved to be ineffective; therefore, corrective measures have been taken in order to rectify the limitations. The argument is that when this technique is deployed against OSH regulations violation, which it seeks to correct, it may be too late, as injuries, accidents or fatalities may have occurred. Thus, suggesting that this approach does not fulfill the requirement of OSH enforcement, which seeks to prevent accidents, injuries or fatalities at large. This is the approach that is majorly used in Nigeria, and to large extent it is a times directed to witch-hunt factories owners that does not know how to bridle their way through with the officers of the regulatory bodies.

#### ***4.4. Proactive and Collective Participatory Approach***

Makhonge (2005) demonstrates that this approach of enforcement is more adequate than the reactive approach. In that it seeks to ensure compliance before the violation of the regulations by: introduction of safety advisers in organizations; introduction of competent and effective safety and health committee in organizations; encouraging self regulatory approach; mandatory formulation of safety policies and appointing competent safety persons who are responsible for safety issues in the organizations. Also, it seeks to deter organizations from defaulting by active participation of all in the organizations and engages support from the regulatory authority; thereby, protecting the health, safety and welfare of the workers.

This suggests that this approach is preventive and collectively participatory in nature; it is similar to what obtains in developed countries and some developing countries like United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom etc; better still, most of its features obtain. For example, the Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012 in Nigeria involves the participation of the Nigerian Institute of Safety Professionals, National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, OSH committees, safety and health representatives, employers, research institutes, principal contractors and the education sector. It places due responsibilities on OSH committees and the safety & health representatives at grass-roots by having them monitor, regulate and maintain the safety of the employees in the workplace. The logic here is that OSH is the responsibility of all; as such, the Bill (the Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012) seeks to indulge the participation of all; perhaps, by aiming to be comprehensive and avoiding some limitations of the existing Factories Act.

#### ***4.5. Enforcement of OSH Regulations in Nigeria***

The Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012 empowers the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health to: enforce and implement OSH measures in the workplace; promote the protection of lives & properties; promote OSH awareness; carry out inspection of the workplaces and monitor the compliance of all regulations or other OSH measures enshrined in the Bill. Correspondingly, the Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund Management Board implements the Employee's Compensation Act of 2011, which makes provisions for compensation for any death, injuries, and diseases or disabilities due to employment. In the mean time, The Factories Act Cap 126, laws of the federation of Nigeria 1990 enables the Inspectorate department of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity to enforce the minimum standard requirements of the Factories Act of 1990 in Nigeria. The enforcement processes require issuing of warning or notices to offenders, after which the lower level of enforcement, which includes the sealing of a defaulting factory, takes place (Okojie, 2010).

Unfortunately, this is not feasible in Nigeria in that the resources required are under estimated and not made available, even where available there has been cases of corruption on the part of many officers that are suppose to ensure compliance (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). Okojie (2010), report that the sealing of premises, which is a form of enforcement rarely happens in Nigeria. Even when they issue sealing notice such notice are not enforced by the regulatory bodies for reason best known to them. Also, Adeogun & Okafor (2013) note that unhealthy exposures to risks of workers in organizations make it evident that OSH laws are not enforced in Nigeria. A good example is a case of gas fire explosion that happen in Akure in the year 2014, the gas plant was denied of approval to site the factory in the location based on safety issues and inappropriateness of the location for such factory as the public is made to know. This factory however, operated in the same location for over 2 years before the ugly incident occurred. Before such approval can be denied the regulatory body would have inspect the site, meaning they know the site. Therefore, for the factory to still operate in the same location for that length of time without any disturbance, things would have happen underground, although the issue official letter to the factory owner on the inappropriateness of the site, maybe to cover themselves.

Okojie, (2010) argued that there should be daily inspection of workplaces by the factory inspectors and monthly reports to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, but to large extent this might not be realistic and achievable. These create room for pondering as to why more enforcement officers cannot be employed. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of over 170 million, so inspection officers are far too few to enforce the OSH regulations in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2013). It is therefore not misleading to assert that lack of person power and lack of commitment to ensuring better enforcement in the part of the enforcement authorities hinder optimum enforcement of OSH regulations.

Equally important, a study by Diugwu, Baba, & Egila, (2012), shows that majority of construction workers in Minna, Nigeria (if not in the whole country) are not aware of the body responsible for enforcing OSH regulations in the industry. In the study, about 79.5 % of the respondents could not identify the correct body responsible for OSH enforcement in Nigeria. This suggests lack of knowledge as per OSH and its ineffective enforcement. Granted that there is proper enforcement of the OSH regulations across Nigerian industries, the workers will be aware, as they must have heard of or seen the enforcement taking place. In view of these highlighted deficiencies, it is pertinent that before safe working environment can be guaranteed in Nigeria, the deficiencies need to be adequately addressed.

#### **4.6. Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Regulations in Nigeria**

The major role of the employer and employee in ensuring safe work environment can be encapsulated in their ability to comply with safety regulations and ensure international best practices. While the employers of organization make sure they have adequate safety guidelines and policies in place; regular training of staff and availability of safety equipments; the employees must make sure they comply with safety guidelines at all times and follow organizational laid down practice guidelines.

Different author have try to enumerate reasons while Nigeria OSH system has failed, Diugwu, et. al., (2012), in their wisdom submitted that the failed OSH system in Nigeria is due to the weak statutory OSH regulations and provisions. They also argued that the appalling level of compliance with OSH regulations in Nigeria (Diugwu et al., 2013; Idubor & Oisamoje, 2013; Okolie & Okoye, 2012) contributes to the poor OSH. In the words of Windapo (2013), regulations are products of legal efforts designed to instill law and order in the society. They should be: properly enforced, unambiguous, updated as required (Anderson, 2007) and properly complied with if the purposes for design are to be achieved.

Nnedinma, Boniface, Keith, & Nano (2014) isolates factors that determine compliance to OSH as include: beliefs; Enforcement of OSH regulations; Higher profit margin; Inadequate funding; Inadequate training of staff and workplace issues; Management commitment; Unemployment; Fear of legal sanctions; Bribery and corruption; and Weak legal structures.

##### **4.6.1. Belief**

Kalejaiye (2013) opined that prior to the enactment of the safety laws in England in 1833, it was believed that accidents were predestined and inevitable, but this was no longer acceptable after the enactment of the above laws. Idubor and Oisamoje (2013) hypothesize that some believe accidents are acts of God i.e. accidents occur because God allows them. A good number of people even workers still hold this premise that accidents are act of God and because of this they usually take issues of compliance with safety requirement with levity. In order words people that have the belief that accident in

work places are act of man and can be adequate curtail usually adhere more to safety requirement (Idubor and Oisamoje, 2013). In Nigeria, our strong religious belief make us more often to attribute everything to God's will and believing that it has been written to happen like that.

##### **4.6.2. Enforcement of Occupational Safety and Health Regulations**

Employers and employees have the tendency not to comply readily with safety requirement when adequate sections are not postulated for violators and implemented (Nzuve, and Lawrence, 2012). The reverse is obtainable where there are adequate regulations that are appropriately enforced. For instance drivers are more likely to comply with road safety regulation in Lagos that most other states in Nigeria, this purely because road safety rules are enforced in Lagos than most other states.

##### **4.6.3. Higher Profit Margin**

Many employers in an attempt to increase profit margin take issue of workers safety and work place safety generally with levity (Nnedinma, Boniface, Keith, & Nano, 2014). They usually did not make personal protective equipment and others unavailable for workers and pay less attention to environmental impact of their work activities. Faremi, Ogunfowokan, Mbada, Olatubi, & Ogungbemi, (2014) reported high level of non availability of personal protective equipment as an important factors in non utilization of PPE among sawmill workers in Nigeria.

In the real sense, adherence with occupational safety has been found to bring about increased productivity (Windapo & Oladapo, 2012). Nzuve and Lawrence (2012), Smallwood and Haupt (2007) posit that increased and sustained level of productivity often reflect on the level of compliance with OSH regulations. Accidents result to injuries, loss of materials and time, payment of compensation and payments to injured staff when off duty, hence increasing the cost of production and affecting the profit margin of the organisation. But many employers in Nigeria pay little interest in the health and wellbeing of their employees probably because they are usually ready available workforce if the eventuality happens (Nnedinma, Boniface, Keith, & Nano, 2014). They therefore see compliance with safety regulations as avoidable expenses.

##### **4.6.4. Inadequate Funding**

The initial cost of organizing and maintaining safety in the work place might be high, making a good number of employers to want to cut corners and avoid compliance with safety regulation. Nzuve & Lawrence (2012); Idubor and Oisamoje (2013) opined that huge capital is required to provide adequate facilities. In that lack of facilities such as personal protective equipments may mean that desperate workforce will risk lives instead of going hungry, hence will not comply with OSH regulations. This explains why Diugwu et al. (2012) argue that lack of resources can hinder OSH management efforts.

#### **4.6.5. Training of Staff and Workplace Issues**

It is not enough to have well writing work place safety policies, work place procedures for safety and personal protective equipment workers must be adequately trained on work place safety issues and appropriate use of personal protective equipments. Adenuga, Soyngbe, & Ajayi (2007); and Idubor & Osiamoje (2013) emphasized that inadequate training is a barrier to OSH regulations compliance. In correspondence, Idubor and Osiamoje (2013) maintain that the performance and productivity of staff is a function of the level of their expertise and skill, which is a function of the standard of training and education received, especially training on the job. These imply that if adequate OSH training and education are not given to staff, their OSH performance e.g., compliance with OSH regulations will be affected.

#### **4.6.6. Management Commitment**

Smallwood (2002) agrees that top management should value safety notwithstanding that lack of value for safety may be as a result of the perception that safety is only cost related as argued by Hinze (1997) in Smallwood (2002). This explains why, Windapo and Oladipo (2012) argued that management commitment should be seen as the determinant factor to compliance with OSH regulations.

#### **4.6.7. Unemployment**

Idubor and Oisamoje (2013) identify unemployment as one of the factors that embolden non-compliance with OSH regulations. The level of unemployment in Nigeria has been on the high side (Trading Economics, 2013). Many people do not mind taking up any job accepting any condition even when they know the effect of such job on their health (Nnedinma, Boniface, Keith, & Nano, 2014).

#### **4.6.8. Fear of Legal Sanctions**

Organizations have been found to comply with OSH for fear of legal actions (Nzuve & Lawrence, 2012). Idubor and Osiamoje (2013) also asserted that legal sanctions organizations may face if they do not comply with OSH legislation may result to high financial cost to the organizations, thereby reducing their profit margin, in that they comply with OSH regulations. This means that the fear of legal action may make organizations comply with OSH regulations.

#### **4.6.9. Bribery and Corruption**

Nigeria's regulatory institutions and the police force have been found to be corrupt (Onyeozili, 2005). Many organizations scale regulatory sanctions because they know people that matters (Idubor & Osiamoje, 2013) The Transparency International (2012) rank Nigeria 139 out of 176 in terms of corruption perception index. Also, bribery and corruption are the biggest hindrances to proper compliance with OSH regulations in Nigeria (Idubor & Osiamoje, 2013).

#### **4.6.10. Weak Legal Structures**

When the legal system of a nation or state is strong people adhere to law and comply with regulations in the same vane when the legal structures are weak people pay little or no recognition to the rule of law. The elite take the advantage of

that to oppress the populace. This also affect organizations compliance to safety regulations, when there are no strong legal structures many organizations usually will not comply with safety dictate while the opposite occur when there are well structured legal system especially as obtainable in many developed nations of the world.

Idubor and Osiamoje (2013) maintained that the legal structure in Nigeria is weak in terms of interpreting and applying the governing laws. In the Nigerian industries where different regulations are in use, there is no uniformity in interpretation of regulations, while Idoro (2008) argues that implementation of the regulations are left to personal discretion. With regard to the penalty for non-compliance with OSH regulations, Windapo and Oladapo (2012) found that non-severe penalties for non-compliance with OSH regulations determine compliance with OSH regulations.

#### **4.6.11. Culture: The Safety Culture**

Culture in the context refers to a way of doing things. According to Idubor & Osiamoje (2013) Nigeria as a country lack the necessary political will to make her citizens to have good safety culture. While Kalejaiye (2013) highlights lack of safety culture in the family, education sector as some of the challenges facing the OSH environment in Nigeria's workplace, Idubor & Osiamoje (2013) contend that cultural dimension determines compliance with OSH regulations. They further posit that an organization with safety culture will have a lower accident rate than one without safety culture. Further on culture, Nigeria as a nation has its own cultural norms; however, there is neither enforcement culture nor implementation culture. While Nigeria as a nation has some beautiful polices, but lack of adequate implementation plans is a major setback to the enforcement of such plans and subsequent compliance with such regulations.

With the current inadequacy in safety policies and regulation in many of our work places; poor enforcement of the available policies due to various issues and challenges mentioned above and poor compliance with safety dictate by both employers and employees has found out by many scholar, which often predispose people in the work place to both health and safety hazards; ensuring safe working environment in Nigeria is more of being a myth than reality.

## **5. Conclusions**

Available data suggest that there are no enough policies and regulations to support and ensure safe working environment in many work place in Nigeria. Even the few policies available and poor enforced by regulatory authorities and not properly comply with by employers and employee for various reasons as highlighted by various scholars. With the increasing level of infrastructural decay in Nigeria, accident, injury and fatality rates will also increase in many of our work places if nothing is done to improve OSH in Nigeria. As a result, more should be done to improve enforcement of OSH regulations, as this will ensure compliance with safety regulations, improve the status of OSH with resultant safe and secured work

environment. In all these, as at present if nothing is done to correct all these aforementioned anomalies, ensuring safe working environment in Nigeria is largely been a myth than reality. In another word, Nigeria presently is far from guarantying safety of her work environment.

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